

DADS TRANSCRIPT MEMORIES OF CREW AND MISSIONS 1944 TO 1945

RECORDED BY MIKE GARBETT AND BRIAN GOULDING IN 1980 AT A REUNION OF THE CREW HELD AT SUDBROOKE LINCOLN, AUTHORS OF SEVERAL BOOKS LANCASTER AT WAR (UNFORTUNATELY SOME OF THE TAPE IS MISSING AND BITS MISSED OUT)
PHOTOS OF FATHER FLYING HIS LANCASTER INTO FISKERTON IS SHOWN IN THEIR BOOK LANCASTER AT WAR NO 3.

WE CREWED UP AT 17 OTU AT SILVERSTONE AND IF MY MEMORY SERVES ME CORRECTLY THE FIRST PERSON THAT I GRAVITATED TO WAS THE NAVIGATOR BOB BROOKS AN AUSTRALIAN, I THINK THE MAIN FACT WAS THAT I WAS LOOKING FOR WHAT I THOUGHT WAS A MATURE RELIABLE GOOD NAVIGATOR AND HE SOMEHOW GAVE ME THAT IMPRESSION, SO WE STARTED TALKING AND I REMEMBER OUT OF THIS THAT HE KNEW ALAN MILLARD THE BOMB AIMER SO WE THEN EVENTUALLY GRAVITATED TO HIM AND HE KNOWING BOB FELT IT WOULD BE BETTER TO JOIN US.

AND AFTERWARDS I DID FIND OUT FROM BOB IT WAS SORT OF FIRST HAND IMPRESSION HE RATHER LIKED THE LOOK OF ME, IT WAS ONE OF THOSE THINGS

I AM ALMOST CERTAIN THEN THAT THE NEXT PERSON THAT WE GRABBED, WAS THE WIRELESS OPERATOR AG ALF RIDPATH WHO WITH HIS FAIR SWEPT BACK HAIR LOOKED A LITTLE BIT OF A GAY LOTHARIO AND WE FELT IT WAS ANOTHER COMPLETE IDIOT THAT WOULD JOIN AN IDIOT TYPE MOB ANYWAY, AND WE SEEM TO GET ON QUITE WELL. THE NEXT ONE WAS DON HARWOOD THE REAR GUNNER WHO ALTHOUGH HE WAS AS YOUNG AS US SEEM TO HAVE AN OLD HEAD ON HIS SHOULDERS, A DEEP VOICE AND GAVE AN IMPRESSION OF RELIABILITY, I SOMETIMES WONDER IF THIS WAS EVER TRUE! AND THEN JOHN WATTERS WAS THE MID UPPER GUNNER A LAD FROM BELFAST WHO I AM ALMOST POSITIVE WAS MUCH YOUNGER THAN WHAT HE MAINTAINED HE REALLY WAS, TO THIS DAY I AM CONVINCED THAT HE WAS REALLY ONLY ABOUT 16/17 YRS AND HE CLAIMED TO BE MUCH OLDER 18/19 YRS, IT WAS A GREAT PITY REALLY THAT I SUBSEQUENTLY LEARNT AFTER THE WAR THAT HE HAD STEPPED UNDER A TUBE TRAIN ON NEWS YEAR EVE COMMITTING SUICIDE, I LEARNT THIS FROM DON HARWOOD THE REAR GUNNER.

ANYWAY AFTER COMPLETING OTU AT SILVERSTONE WE

FINALLY ARRIVED AT 1661 CONVERSION UNIT AT WINTHORPE JUST OUTSIDE NEWARK AND TO BE HONEST I CAN'T REMEMBER MUCH ABOUT MY INSTRUCTORS AT ALL - ALL I CAN REMEMBER IS THE BLOODY STIRLING!! NOW THE MOST INTERESTING THING WAS THAT ALAN MILLARD THE AUSTRALIAN BOMB AIMER WAS A FAILED PILOT WHO HAD GONE ON TO THE BOMB AIMERS COURSE. SO FROM THE VERY BEGINNING AS A CREW I DIRECTED, IF ONE CAN ASSUME THE WORDS DIRECTED THAT EVERYBODY WOULD DOUBLE UP ON EVERYBODY ELSE IN CASE OF ANYTHING HAPPENING AND SO ALAN MILLARD WOULD TAKE OVER IF ANYTHING HAPPENED TO ME BECAUSE AS HE GOT AS NEAR TO GETTING HIS WINGS IT WAS QUITE POSSIBLE IN FACT HIGHLY PROBABLE THAT HE COULD FLY THE AIRCRAFT BACK AND MAKE SOME REASONABLE ATTEMPT AT LANDING IT. THE WIRELESS OPERATOR DOUBLED UP AS A GUNNER, THE NAVIGATOR BOB BROOKS DOUBLED UP AS A BOMB AIMER AS DID THE FLIGHT ENGINEER, AND IF MY MEMORY SERVES ME CORRECTLY AS WELL, ALAN MILLARD THE BOMB AIMER ALSO PARTIALLY DOUBLED UP AS A NAVIGATORS POINT OF VIEW AND THE REAR GUNNER DOUBLED UP FOR THE WIRELESS OPERATOR. WE LEFT JOHNNIE WATTERS THE MID UPPER GUNNER TWIT ON HIS OWN AS WE FELT IT BETTER LEAVING HIM UPSTAIRS THAN DOUBLING UP FOR ANYBODY

I CAN ALSO REMEMBER THE FACT THAT BOB BROOKS THE NAVIGATOR WAS A JUDO EXPERT AND IN FACT IT WAS COMMON PRACTISE WITH OUR CREW TO EGG YOUNG WATTERS JOHN TO ATTACK BOB BROOKS WHO WOULD THROW HIM AROUND THE CREW HUT UNTIL FINALLY THE YOUNG IDIOT IRISHMAN LEARNT TO PACK IT IN FOR THE NIGHT, WHEN WE WOULD RESUME AGAIN THE NEXT NIGHT.

COMING BACK TO THE STIRLING I THINK THE MOST VIVID IMPRESSION FOR ME INITIALLY WAS TAXING. NOW THIS WITHOUT A DOUBT WAS PROBABLY THE MOST BARBARIC BASTARDISE BLOODY AIRCRAFT I HAVE EVER MET IN MY LIFE FOR TAXING. IF MY MEMORY SERVES ME CORRECTLY THERE A HUGE YELLOW BRAKE AND YOU OPERATED THE FOUR THROTTLES AND PULLED THIS MASSIVE GREAT LORRY BRAKE BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS SWINGING THE RUDDERS AROUND WHILE THIS, I CAN ONLY DESCRIBE IT AS A TYRANNOSAURUS REX OF A DINOSAUR PROWLED RATHER THAN ROLLED ALL OVER THE PLACE, IN ADDITION THE FLIGHT ENGINEER SAT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE AIRCRAFT IN WHAT WAS LIKE A SUBMARINE WITH ALL HIS FOURTEEN AND IF MY MEMORY SERVES ME CORRECTLY ONCE AGAIN THE FUEL TANKS FOR CROSS FEEDING AND OTHER PURPOSES AND IN ADDITION IT DIDN'T MATTER WHAT ANYBODY DID THIS COW OF AN AIRCRAFT NEVER REACHED ITS CEILING EVER. LANDING AT WINTHORPE WITH THE RUNWAY THAT RAN PARALLEL WITH THE MAIN NEWARK/LINCOLN ROAD ONCE AGAIN THIS BLOODY HANDBRAKE WAS A DISADVANTAGE RATHER THAN AN ADVANTAGE AS I CAN ONLY SAY FROM THINKING DEEPLY ABOUT IT WHOEVER

DESIGNED THE BLOODY STERLING SHOULD HAVE BEEN MENTALLY EXAMINED.

ANOTHER THING ABOUT STERLINGS WAS CORRING THIS WAS WHERE, I AM ALMOST SURE ITS AS IF THE OIL TEMPERATURE WENT DOWN THAT YOU DROPPED THE UNDERCARRIAGE OPENED UP FULL THROTTLES WITH PART FLAP AND STAGGERED ALONG WITH WHAT CAN ONLY BE TERMED AS FOUR BLOODY GREAT BIG BULLEYES FOR THE ENGINES WHICH OF COURSE MEANT FROM AN OPERATIONAL POINT OF VIEW THAT THEY WERE SITTING DUCKS FOR ANYBODY, AND WAS IT 460 OR 490 TWO TURNS ON THE WHEELS TO GET THE UNDERCARRIAGE DOWN IF YOU COULD NOT LOWER IT NORMALLY BECAUSE I REMEMBER THAT HAPPENING TO US ONCE.

IT WAS AT WINTHORPE AS WELL THAT WE HAD TO GET RID OF OUR FIRST ENGINEER BECAUSE UNFORTUNATELY IT WAS TAKE OFF WHEELS UP "BREAKFAST UP" AND THERE WAS JUST NO WAY HE WAS GOING TO MAKE IT.

WE THEN TOOK ANOTHER ENGINEER CALLED GEORGE BEDFORD ON WHO OF COURSE FLEW WITH ME DURING THE 1ST TOUR AND GEORGE BEDFORD THE 2ND FLIGHT ENGINEER WAS A VERY PROSAIC LAD INDEED HE BELIEVED IMPLICITLY THAT HIS JOB AS A FLIGHT ENGINEER WAS TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT WHATEVER AIRCRAFT WE WERE FLYING WAS ABSOLUTELY IN TIP TOP CONDITION- BECAUSE I CAN REMEMBER COMING BACK FROM A TRIP AND I THOUGHT FOR ONCE I AM GOING TO LIGHT UP A CIGARETTE AND HAVE A SMOKE AS WE WERE FLYING BACK ACROSS THE NORTH SEA AND I DISTINCTLY REMEMBER HIM GOING BANANAS OVER ME SMOKING A CIGARETTE.

AFTER A SHORT PERIOD OF ABOUT 14HRS OF WHICH 7HRS DAYLIGHT AND 7HRS NIGHT AT LANC FINISHING SCHOOL AT SYSERTON I THEN ARRIVED AT 49 SQUADRON FISKERTON

WHERE FOR MY SINS I WAS GIVEN "A" APPLE TO FLY I CAN REMEMBER THE FIRST TRIP WHICH WAS A 2ND DICKIE TRIP WHICH WAS WITH RUSS EVANS AND THAT WAS TO DANZIG BAY GIDENER, KONISBERG AREA WHICH WAS A 9HRS 15MIN TRIP, I THINK THAT ALL I CAN REMEMBER ABOUT THIS WAS THE FACT THAT IT SEEMED COMPLETELY IDIOTIC TO ME THAT A PILOT SHOULD GO ON A TRIP AND RISK GETTING SHOT DOWN WITH ANOTHER PILOT AND CREW, WHEREUPON HIS CREW WOULD HAVE TO GO BACK ALL OVER IT AGAIN WITH ANOTHER PILOT! THE THING WAS TO STAND BEHIND THE PILOT AND FLIGHT ENGINEER AND OBSERVE "WHAT I DO NOT KNOW". I SUPPOSE THE IDEA WAS THAT YOU WENT WITH A RELATIVELY EXPERIENCED CREW AND AS IT WERE SHUCK DOWN WITH THEM AND GOT AN IDEA OR IMPRESSION OF WHAT THE WHOLE CAPER WAS ABOUT

BUT ALSO AS I SAY I TEND TO THINK THAT BECAUSE YOU AND YOUR CREW WERE DIFFERENT WHATEVER SHAPE OR FORM THERE WAS GOING TO BE A DIFFERENT REACTION ANYWAY BECAUSE YOU WOULD HAVE TO BE TEACHING YOUR CREW ON YOUR VERY FIRST TRIP WHEN YOU HAD ONLY DONE ONE YOURSELF! WHICH HAD NOT GIVE YOU MUCH EXPERIENCE ANYWAY. AND INFACIT IF RUSS EVANS IS STILL RUNNING AROUND

HE PROBABLY THINKS OF THIS IDIOT, WHO AFTERWARDS WE GREW VERY FRIENDLY TOGETHER.

MY NEXT TRIP WAS ONE WITH MY OWN CREW TO TOURS MARSHALLING YARD AT 7,000 FEET AND I THINK THIS WILL ALWAYS LIVE IN MY MEMORY AS FRANKLY IT STARTED OUT AS A COMPLETE SHAMBLES BUT IT HELPED THE CREW INTO A FIGHTING UNIT.

WE STARTED UP AND TAXIED ROUND TOWARDS TAKEOFF AND I THINK I WAS ABOUT 3RD 4TH OR 5TH INLINE COMING UP TO THE RUNWAY AND ALAN MILLARD THE BOMB AIMER A TYPICALLY AUSTRALIAN IF I MY USE THE WORD WAS IN THE BOMB AIMERS COMPARTMENT AND PISSING ABOUT AS USUALLY WHEN SUDDENLY IN A TYPICALLY AUSTRALIAN TWANG OVER THE INTERCOM CAME "I HAVE PULLED MY BLOODY CHUTE AND IT HAS BELLOWED OUT" I IMMEDIATELY SAID "WELL THERE IS NO WAY WE CAN TURN OFF HERE AND I CAN'T SEE US TURNING ROUND HERE AND TAXING DOWN THE END TO GET ANOTHER CHUTE FOR YOU SO WE SHALL HAVE TO GO AS IS AND I WOULD SUGGEST TO YOU THAT IF WE HAVE TO BAIL OUT YOU HOLD THE CHUTE UP TO YOUR CHEST AND WHEN YOU GET CLEAR OF THE AIRCRAFT RELEASE IT BECAUSE ITS ALREADY OPENED ANYWAY" UPON WHICH IF MY MEMORY SERVES ME CORRECTLY HE REPLIED "THAT HE HAD'NT COME 12,000 ——— !! MILES FOR THIS SORT OF CAPER!! IT JUST SO HAPPENED THAT THE VERY FIRST TRIP I WAS USING A OBSERVE TYPE CHUTE SO IN A FLASH YOU WOULDN'T CALL IT INSPIRATION MORE DESPERATION I SAID ALRIGHT YOU BETTER TAKE MY CHUTE THEN, INCASE ANYTHING HAPPENS, UPON WHICH HE SAID THANKS VERY MUCH SKIP AND PULLED MY CHUTE DOWN INTO THE BOMB AIMERS COMPARTMENT, AND BY THAT TIME I WAS ON THE RUNWAY AND BEGINNING TO TAKE OFF AND IT WAS PROVABLY OR COLLOQUIAL NOT UNTIL I WAS AIRBORNE

THAT I SHIT A BRICK!! SO OF COURSE THE TRIP COMMENCED WITH ME WITHOUT A CHUTE AND HE THE GREAT ALAN MILLARD WITH TWO, ONE WHICH WAS OPENED WHICH HE HAD STUFFED INTO A CORNER OF THE BOMB AIMERS COMPARTMENT AND AFTERWARDS WHEN WE RETURNED HOME THE REST OF THE CREW SAID SOME HOW OR OTHER THEY ALL FELT THAT THEY MUST NOT LET ME DOWN BECAUSE THERE I WAS FLYING WITHOUT A CHUTE WHEN EVERYBODY ELSE WAS OK AND NO WAY WERE THEY GOING TO LET THE SKIPPER DOWN. SO HAVING SET OFF AS IT WERE AT A SLIGHT DISADVANTAGE AND THINKING OF WAFTING MY WAY GENERALLY DOWN THROUGH THE AIR SHOULD WE BE SHOT UP ON NOTHING.

WE GET TOWARDS THE TARGET AND STARTED THE RUN IN, DURING OUR TRAINING IT HAD BEEN EMPHASISED WE WERE NOT GOING OVER THE OTHER SIDE TO CHUCK OR THROW BOMBS AROUND AND THAT BASICALLY YOU SHOULD PUT THEM DOWN IN THE RIGHT SPOT SO WHEN WE CAME UP TO THE TARGET AND ALAN WAS SAYING "STEADY RIGHT, STEADY OH I HAVE MISSED IT GO ROUND AGAIN" I LIKE THE IDIOT I WAS WENT ROUND AGAIN. NOT THINKING GET RID OF THE BLOODY THINGS. SO OF COURSE I WENT ROUND AGAIN AND RAN IN AND THIS TIME WE PUT THEM DOWN AND IF MY MEMORY SERVES ME CORRECTLY IT WAS A AIMING POINT. IT WAS NOT TILL WE GOT BACK THAT WE REALISED THAT UNDER NORMAL CONDITIONS CREWS DID'NT NORMALLY DO THIS SORT OF THING. SO REALLY OF WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A DISASTER TURNED OUT TO BE A EXCELLENT THING FROM THE CREWS POINT OF VIEW BECAUSE WE BECAME WEILLED AS A FIGHTING UNIT. IT ALSO BECAME APPARENT ON THIS TRIP BECAUSE WE REALISED EARLIER ON THERE WERE THREE ALANS OR ALS IN THE CREW THAT WAS THE BOMB AIMER, WIRELESS OP AND MYSELF, SO THE REAR GUNNER AND MID UPPER GUNNER WOULD CALL ME SKIP AND THE REST OF THE CREW WOULD CALL ME PILOT, THE IDEA BEING THAT IF SOMEBODY CALLED ME SKIP I STARTED WEAIVING STRAIGHT AWAY ON THE GROUNDS THAT A GUNNER WAS COMING UP ON THE INTERCOM.

I THINK THE MAIN THING ABOUT MAILLY LE COMP WAS THE ENORMOUS COCKUP OF THIS OPERATION IN WHICH 1 GROUP CAME WITH US ON THE TRIP AND BECAUSE OF THE SHAMBLES AT THE TARGET INCLUDING VIRTUALLY ALL THE BLINDED ILLUMINATORS BEING KNOCKED OFF THERE WERE "T.I.S" PUT DOWN IN TWO DIFFERENT PLACES ONE FOR 1 GROUP AND ONE FOR US AWAY FROM THE TARGET UPON WHICH EVERYBODY WAS TO CIRCLE THEIR RESPECTIVE "T.I" BY THIS TIME I HAD LEARNT ENOUGH NOT TO GO NEAR ANY "T.I". WE WERE A LITTLE AWAY FROM OUR ONE QUIETLY CIRCLING IF YOU CAN POINT THAT OUT, WE KNEW THAT 1 GROUP IF MY MEMORY SERVES ME CORRECTLY WERE CIRCLING A YELLOW "T.I" AS IF THEY WERE ON A RACE TRACK WITH A RESULT THAT THE FIGHTER BOYS WERE HAVING A FIELD DAY WITH THAT LOT

COS WHEN THE TIME CAME FOR US TO COME IN I CAN REMEMBER TWO INCIDENTS, ONE WITH OUR RUN IN WITH THE BOMB DOORS OPEN A LANC WENT PAST US LIKE A BAT OUT HELL WITH HIS BOMB DOORS OPEN AND THEN A FOKWOLF 190 WENT OVER THE TOP OF OUR COCKPIT BECAUSE THE REAR GUNNER HAD CALLED UP "FIGHTER" AND OF COURSE I WAS ON THE BOMBING RUN AND HE COULD'NT HAVE BEEN MORE THAN 20 OR 30FT OFF THE TOP OF US WHERE HE WAS GOING FOR THE LANC THAT HAD JUST PASSED US AND HE FIRED HIT THIS LANC AND KNOCKED IT OFF "IT JUST BLEW UP" ITS RATHER IRONIC AS WELL BECAUSE DURING THIS TRIP WE HAD THREE COMBATS AS WELL IT WAS A PRETTY HAIRY DO.

THERE WAS SO MANY FIGHTERS AROUND US IT WAS TO BE

UNBELIEVABLE, THEIR DAY FIGHTERS WERE UP AS WELL AS IT WAS SUCH A BRIGHT MOONLIGHT NIGHT.

IF MY MEMORY SERVES ME CORRECTLY THAT THIS TRIP WAS ALSO WHERE WE SPOTTED A WHITE HINEKELL 111 AND MY REAR GUNNER SAID LETS GO DOWN AND KNOCK IT OFF AND I SAID WAIT A MINUTE WHEN SUDDENLY IT TURNED TOWARDS AND WE WERE ATTACKED BY TWO FIGHTERS THAT WERE WITH IT, THEY WERE WORKING I AM ALMOST CERTAIN IN CONJUNCTION WITH THIS HINEKELL, SO THAT AS ONE FIGHTER CAME IN AND YOU CORKSCREWED INTO HIM THE OTHER FIGHTER WOULD THEN BE ON THE OUTSIDE TO NAIL YOU WHICH OF COURSE WOULD FORCE YOU TOWARDS THE HINEKELL WHICH ALSO WOULD LET FLY AT YOU SO INFACT YOU WERE IN REALITY YOU WERE BEING ATTACKED BY THREE. I DO'NT KNOW PERHAPS HE WAS A TRAINEE AIRCRAFT OR WHATEVER IT WAS WE SEEM TO THINK IT WAS A BLOODY GOOD PLOY, BECAUSE WE MENTIONED IT WHEN WE GOT BACK FROM THE TRIP THAT IT SEEMED LIKE A NEW SYSTEM OPERATING BY THEM. ALL WE KNEW THAT WE WERE ATTACKED BY TWO FIGHTERS WHICH APPARENTLY WERE WORKING IN CONJUNCTION WITH IT.

THE ONLY THING I CAN REMEMBER ABOUT THE NEXT TRIP TO SALSBBREE ARSENAL WAS THAT ONE WE WERE HIT BY LIGHT FLAK WHICH NECESSITATED US HAVING TO CRASH LAND AT WITTERING THE OTHER THING WAS WE SPOTTED A TRAIN WITH WHITE STEAM COMING UP FROM IT SO WE ATTACKED IT RACED UP AND DOWN IT WITH THE GUNNERS FIRING AT THE TRAIN. IT SEEMS IRONIC TO ME THAT ALL I CAN REMEMBER IS NOT SO MUCH LANDING AT WITTERING ALTHOUGH I DO KNOW NOT HAVING ANY BRAKES OR FLAPS JUST SHOOTING UP THIS TRAIN WHICH WE THOUGHT WAS A HILARIOUS EPISODE NOT REALISING OF COURSE THAT WE COULD OF EASILY BEEN BROUGHT DOWN EITHER BY GUNS ON THE TRAIN OR BY A FIGHTER FOR JUST GOING DOWN AND LARKING ABOUT I MEAN AFTER ALL WHY SHOULD FIGHTERS JUST ATTACK TRAINS WHY CANT LANCASTERS!!

AFTER THE NEXT TRIP IN WHICH WE HAD THREE COMBATS AGAIN WITH NO CLAIMS, CAME THE ONE TO BELGIUM BOURG LEOPOLD WHICH I WON THE D.F.C.

I REMEMBER ON THIS THAT WE WERE ATTACKED WITHOUT EITHER OF MY GUNNERS SPOTTING THIS BOY HE JUST CAME IN FROM BELOW IN THE DARK AND THE NEXT THING THAT WE KNEW THAT HE WAS KNOCKING SIX OUT OF US BECAUSE LET ME RECAP - ONE CANNON SHELL KNOCKED OUT THE WIRELESS SET - WE HAD A FIRE IN THE BOMB BAY FROM THE ATTACK AND WHATS MORE THE FLYING CONTROL SYSTEM WAS HEAVILY DAMAGED BECAUSE SHE REARED LIKE A STRICKEN HORSE AND WENT OVER ONTO HER BACK THEN WE DROPPED ABOUT 12,000 FEET BEFORE I PULLED HER OUT

THE MAIN THING WAS THAT HE HAD GOT VIRTUALLY ALL HIS ATTACK IN BEFORE WE RIPPED UP AND WENT - AS WE HAD NOT DROPPED OUR

BOMBS AND WE WERE IN THE DIVE AND THE FIRE I OPENED THE BOMB DOORS AND SAID JETTISON THE BOMBS AND SEE IF WE CAN BLOW THE FIRE OUT THE NEXT MINUTE WELL REALLY IT WAS'NT THE NEXT MINUTE BECAUSE WE MUST HAVE LOST 10,000 - 12,000, FEET IN THE DIVE BY HINT OF PULLING AND MANOEUVRING THE LANC CAME OUT AND SHOT STRAIGHT UP AGAIN WITH A VIOLENT TENDENCY TO GO OVER ONTO ITS BACK - TRYING TO CONTROL HER (IT SEEMS RATHER FUNNY TO CALL A LANC HER) TRYING TO CONTROL HER I HAD TO CROSS MY RIGHT LEG OVER MY LEFT LEG AND HOLD THE CONTROL COLUMN FORWARD WITH MY RIGHT KNEECAP THEN I HAD TO HOLD FULL LEFT AILERON DOWN AND THIS BROUGHT HER STRAIGHT AND LEVEL AND KEPT HER STRAIGHT AND LEVEL FOR THE MOMENT. I CALLED THE BOMB AIMER UP AND THE FLIGHT ENGINEER TO GET INTO THE BOMB AIMERS COMPARTMENT AND I HAD WITH MY LEFT LEG FULL LEFT RUDDER THE IDEA BEING THAT ALAN MILLARD WOULD COME UP AND CONTROL THE THROTTLE TO ASSIST ME BECAUSE WE HAD TO HAVE THE ENGINES OUT OF SYNCHRONISATION IN ORDER TO KEEP HER STRAIGHT AND LEVEL AND GEORGE THE FLIGHT ENGINEER TIED A PIECE OF ROPE ROUND THE LEFT RUDDER AND WAS HOLDING ONTO IT TO HELP - IT WAS DURING THIS PART AS WELL ONE THINKS OF THE HILARIOUS EPISODE OF THE NAVIGATOR SAYING "I HAVE BEEN HIT AND I WILL GIVE YOU A COURSE FOR HOME" WHICH HE DID OF COURSE THIS TOOK ME AGES TO TURN ONTO THE COURSE WITH THE LANC CRIPPLED AS IT WAS THEN HE FELT INSIDE HIS SHIRT UNDER HIS MAE WEST AND SUBSEQUENTLY SAID "CHRIST ITS SWEAT" WE AND I SAY WE BECAUSE THERE WAS THREE OF US DOING THE JOB FLEW BACK TO ENGLAND AND WAS DIVERTED TO WOODBRIDGE WHERE I WAS TOLD TO BRING IT IN - SO AS I CAME ACROSS THE AIRFIELD FOR THE FIRST TIME I TOLD ALL MY CREW TO GO FORWARD AND BAIL OUT BECAUSE I DID NOT THINK I COULD BRING IT IN SAFELY THERE WAS THE PROVERBIAL RHUBARBS WE STAYING WITH YOU RATHER THAN BAILING OUT - SO THEY WENT TO THE CRASH POSITIONS EXCEPT FOR ALAN MILLARD AND MYSELF AND I BROUGHT IT IN AND CRASH LANDED WHERE AFTERWARDS IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A MASTERLY LANDING ACCORDING TO THE CITATION

ALL I CAN REMEMBER WAS THAT TWO THINGS ONE WHERE THE CREW SUBSEQUENTLY COUNTED 200 HOLES IN THE AIRCRAFT FROM THE FIGHTERS ATTACK AND THE QUESTION OF THE LITTLE RUM BOTTLES FROM WHICH WE ALL GOT STONED OUT OF MINDS AFTER HAVING SURVIVED BECAUSE ALSO HALF THE PORT RUDDER WAS MISSING AS WELL BUT MOST OF THE ATTACK WAS CANNON SHELL BECAUSE APPROXIMATELY 2 WEEKS AFTER THIS EPISODE I FOUND OUT THAT I HAD BEEN AWARDED THE D.F.C. WELL IF YOU MEAN A CELEBRATION ALL I KNOW IS THAT AT WOODBRIDGE WE GOT STONED OUT OF OUR MINDS BY WIPING ALL THE

RUM BOTTLES PRESUMABLY THEY WERE MEANT FOR OTHER CREWS WHO CRASHED LANDED THERE AS WELL. ALTHOUGH WE SAT OUTSIDE THE HUT AND AS THEY COLLOQUIAL PUT, PISSED OUT OF OUR MINDS - YES THERE WAS A DO IN THE OFFICES MESS BUT AS THE REST OF MY CREW WERE N.C.O.S. WE HAD A LITTLE ONE ON ARE OWN BUT THE OTHER THING WAS THAT OF COURSE MY WIFE SHE WAS NOT THEN SEWED MY D.F.C. ONTO MY TUNIC

ANOTHER TRIP WAS TO A PLACE CALLED MAISY I STILL CANT PRONOUNCE THE NAME OF IT IN FRENCH AND WE HAD BEEN ATTACKED WE COULD NOT OPEN THE BOMB DOORS AND WE HAD 13,000 LBS BOMBS ABOARD INCIDENTALLY THE WHOLE OF THE HYDRAULIC SYSTEM HAD GONE AS WELL - AFTERWARDS ON THE WAY HOME WE WERE DIVERTED TO SILVERSTONE OUR OLD OTU WHERE WE HAD FIRST CREWED UP ON WELLINGTONS - COMING INTO LAND I HAD TO USE THE EMERGENCY AIR SYSTEM TO BRING DOWN THE UNDERCARRIAGE AND FLAPS WHEN ALOAD OF REDS WERE FIRED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE RUNWAY AND I WAS TOLD TO OVERSHOOT THIS MEANT THAT I INSTINCTIVELY PUSHED THE THROTTLE OPEN APPARENTLY THERE WAS STILL ANOTHER AIRCRAFT ON THE RUNWAY SOMEWHERE SO WE STARTED TO STAGGER ALONG ON AT ABOUT 200FEET WITH A FULL BOMB LOAD UNDERCARRIAGE AND FLAPS DOWN WITHOUT ANY CHANCE OF GETTING THE UNDERCARRIAGE AND FLAPS UP AND I WAS DIVERTED TO TURWESTON - I CAN REMEMBER LETTING A FLOOD OF LANGUAGE COME OUT OVER THE RT (RADIO TRANSMITTER) TO THE CONTROL TOWER AND PUTTING ME IN THIS STUPID POSITION - SO WE STAGGERED TO TURWESTON IN THIS CONDITION WHERE I BROUGHT IT STRAIGHT IN AFTER USING THE INTERCOM VITRIOLIC TO ALL AND SUNDRY WITH SOME WORDS I WOULD THINK ARE NOT MENTIONED IN BOOKS ANYMORE - WE LANDED ONTO THE RUNWAY AND RAN OFF ONTO THE GRASS AND I REMEMBER A TRUCK COMING OUT TO US AND SAYING THEY THOUGHT WE HAD SOME PRACTISE BOMBS ABOARD AND WHEN THEY WERE TOLD IT WAS A FULL BOMB LOAD THEY ALL LEFT BACK INTO THE TRUCK AND DISAPPEARED OVER THE HORIZON AT HIGH SPEED

SO WE LEFT THE LANC WERE IT WAS AND STARTED TO TRUDGE ACROSS THE AIRFIELD AND BY DAYLIGHT I REMEMBER DISTINCTIVELY SOME TWIT AS A WING COMMANDER GIVING ME A ROASTING OVER MY USE OF FOUL LANGUAGE ON THE INTERCOM - IT DID NOT APPEAR TO HIM THAT THERE HAD BEEN ANYTHING WRONG WITH OVERSHOOTING ME WITH A FULL BOMB LOAD WITH UNDERCARRIAGE AND FLAPS DOWN AND ONCE AGAIN I AM CERTAIN THAT AT THE SAME TIME A HALIFAX HAD OVERSHOT AND GONE INTO THE CLOTHING STORE AND BLOWN UP THE THING ABOUT THIS INCIDENT IS THAT I WILL NOT RELATE ANYMORE BECAUSE IT WAS FAR BETTER TO DRAW A CURTAIN ACROSS

WHEN ONE CONSIDERS THAT AT THESE TWO AIRFIELDS WERE EX
OPERATIONAL PEOPLE WHO WERE NOW INSTRUCTING WHO APPEARED
TO HAVE LOST ALL SEMBLANCE OF REALITY

I THINK IT WOULD BE OF INTEREST TO RELATE ONE SMALL HUMOROUS
INCIDENT AND THAT WAS THAT THERE WAS A LEADER NAVIGATION
CHAP "PATCHETT" WHO ALWAYS SWORE BLIND THAT HE WOULD NEVER
FLY WITH ME BECAUSE I WAS THE HAIRIEST ARSE PILOT ON THE
SQUADRON

COS I WAS NOTORIOUS FOR LOW FLYING AND FOR GETTING BACK
FIRST

WELL WE HAD BEEN UP TO THE OPS ROOM TO PREPARE FOR THE NIGHTS
TRIP AND BOB BROOKS THE NAVIGATOR HAD A BICYCLE AND ON THE
REAR WHEEL ON ONE SIDE WAS FREEWHEEL AND THE OTHER SIDE WAS
FIXED - HE ALWAYS USED THE FREEWHEEL SIDE AND RIDING BACK
FROM THE OPS ROOM WOULD GO ROUND THIS BEND AND PUT HIS
FOOT DOWN AND DIRT TRACK LIKE A SPEEDWAY RIDER

WHILE HE WAS IN THE OPS ROOM PREPARING THE NAVIGATION ASPECT
WE TURNED THE REAR WHEEL ROUND SO THAT HE WAS ON FIXED AND
SO HE RODE ALONG PUT HIS RIGHT FOOT DOWN AND HIS LEFT ONE
OUT TO DO A SPEEDWAY RIDERS BROADSIDE AND QUITE NATURALLY
CAME OFF HIS BIKE HEADLONG INTO THE HEDGE AND DITCH !!
IMMEDIATELY THE DOC WAS INFORMED AND HE WAS CARRIED TO THE
SICK BAY WHERE HE WAS TOLD HE COULD NOT GO THAT NIGHT SO
PATCHETT WAS NOMINATED TO COME WITH ME AND MY CREW AND
DID NOT LIKE THIS ONE AT ALL !

AND THE FUNNY THING ABOUT THIS TRIP WAS THAT WE WERE
ATTACKED TWICE - WITH PATCHETT SITTING THERE AND ALL OF
SUDDEN OVER THE INTERCOM AFTER THE SECOND ATTACK HE SAID "I
THINK IN FUTURE ANYTIME YOU WANT ME I WILL COME WITH YOU
BECAUSE I DID NOT REALISE THAT YOU AND YOUR CREW WERE SO
EFFICIENT OVER THE ENEMY TERRITORY "

I KNOW THAT IT BECAME A BYE WORD THAT I WAS INVARIABLY FIRST
BACK THERE WAS VARIOUS NAMES APPLIED TO ME INCLUDING
CHAMPION JOCKEY AND IT BECAME ALMOST A MATTER OF PROUD
WITH ME

A. TO BE FIRST BACK AND

B. FOR ANOTHER CREW ON THE SQUADRON TO BEAT ME BACK WHICH
FROM MY MEMORY NEVER DID HAPPEN
THE MAIN ASPECT APPEARED TO BE HOW WAS IT I GOT FIRST BACK AND
YET MY FUEL LOGS ALWAYS SHOWED THAT WE DID QUITE WELL REGARD
TO FUEL CONSUMPTION

THE ANSWER WAS SIMPLE AND IT WAS KEPT A CLOSELY REGARDED
SECRET WITH MY CREW

THAT WHEN WE WERE TOLD TO START DESCENDING AT CERTAIN
POINTS I STILL KEPT ALTITUDE AND I WOULD COME DOWN IN VERY

SIMPLE SMALL STEPS STILL WITH THE SAME REVS THE RESULT WAS THAT THE TIME EVERYBODY WAS AT CIRCUIT HEIGHT AND FLYING STRAIGHT AND LEVEL TOWARDS BASE I WAS STILL SOME 1000S FEET ABOVE THEM AND VIRTUALLY AT A SIMILAR POINT RELATIVE TO THE EARTH'S SURFACE IN RELATION TO THEM THEN THROTTLING BACK AND PUTTING MY NOSE DOWN I WOULD REACH WHAT ONE MIGHT CALL FANTASTIC SPEEDS FOR THE LANCASTER AND RACE PASS EVERYBODY REACHING BASE FIRST AND NOBODY COULD UNDERSTAND HOW THIS KEPT HAPPENING TIME AND TIME AGAIN

ITS INTERESTING BECAUSE AFTER THE WAR WHEN I WENT BACK TO 83 SQUADRON ON LINCOLN'S I APPLIED THE SAME TECHNIQUE AND WAS INVARIABLE FIRST BACK AGAIN AND NOBODY COULD UNDERSTAND EITHER HOW THAT HAPPENED.

ANOTHER THING I WAS NOTORIOUS FOR I SAY NOTORIOUS IN APOSTROPHES AND ITALICS WAS COMING INTO THE AIRFIELD IN LINE WITH THE RUNWAY AT NOUGHT FEET CLEAN AS A WHISTLE AND A THIRD OR HALF WAY DOWN THE RUNWAY PULLING UP VERY VERY STEEPLY AND GOING INTO A VERY VERY TIGHT LEFT HAND TURN AND WHEN I WAS IN AN ALMOST UPSIDE DOWN POSITION UNDER CARRIAGE AND FLAPS DOWN AND THROTTLED BACK TEMPORARILY STICK WELL BACK IN MY STOMACH AND A SPLIT ARSE TURN ONTO THE RUNWAY LIKE A SPITFIRE OR A HURRICANE. I HAD A FEW ROCKETS OVER THIS BUT NOBODY SEEMED REALLY TO OBJECT TO THIS ONE !!

I THINK INFACIT THIS COULD REALLY BE MENTIONED IN THE BOOK IF HE GOT ROUND TO IT

THERE WAS A DRIVER A WAAFF ON 49 SQUADRON AND ALL WE KNEW HER WAS SWISS ROLL SAL AND SHE WAS EXTREMELY KEEN ON MY WIRELESS OP ALF WITH A RESULT WAS WHEN WE LANDED WHOEVER WAS CLOSE BEHIND US SHE WOULD INVARIABLELY COME TO OUR DISPERSAL FIRST TO COLLECT US AND GET US BACK TO DE-BRIEFING IT WAS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE WITH HER! AND I REMEMBER WE HAD BEEN TO LINCOLN THE CREW AND I AND WE HAD GOT BACK TO FISKERTON FIVE MILE HOLT AND YOU CROSSED THE RIVER BY A LITTLE FERRY BOAT IN THE DARK AND SWISS ROLL SAL WAS WITH MY WIRELESS OP AG WITH SOME OTHER WAAFFS AND A COUPLE OF OTHER CREWS AND THERE WAS A HILARIOUS MIXUP IN THE BOAT WHEN HALF OF THEM WENT INTO THE WATER! AND I THINK THAT ITS JUST THE FACT THAT AS I SAY EVERYBODY KNEW SWISS ROLL SAL